

Professional Development Committee Recommendations

African American History Education Commission

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Legislative Recommendation

- Revise Virginia's Teacher Evaluation Regulations and Virginia's Uniform Performance standards for School Leaders to include cultural proficiency efficacy.

Legislative Recommendation

- Require every Virginia educator to certify that they have enrolled in Cultural Competency Professional Development by 2022.

Legislative Recommendation

- Allocate funding and personnel resources to develop and implement comprehensive professional development in the areas of cultural competency and African American History content for Virginia educators.

Legislative Recommendation

- Mandate certification (Continuing Education Units) in African American History for all holders of education licenses issued by the Virginia Department of Education (this includes initial licensure and renewals).

Legislative Recommendation

- Amend requirements for licensure endorsements in History/Social Science to require evidence of course study in African American History.

Legislative Recommendation

- Require a credit in African American History as a new requirement for graduation in Virginia. The new elective course in African American History developed by VDOE and WHRO could be used to fulfill this requirement.

General Recommendations

- Broaden the teaching pipeline to seek out and train diverse teachers.
- Incentivize universities and colleges to offer courses and professional development on Black history, teaching Black history, and cultural competency for teachers. Courses and professional development should be for secondary and elementary teachers and librarians.
- Encourage universities and colleges in Virginia to offer certificates in African American history and/or African American Studies for teachers and prospective teachers.

General Recommendations

- Enhance Virginia's School Climate Survey to include evaluation of Culturally Responsive School Climate and report these outcomes on Virginia's School Quality Profiles.
- Establish common language between education preparation programs and school divisions that promote equity and inclusivity.
- Develop models for training about implicit bias and culturally-responsive pedagogy.

General Recommendations

- Make family and community engagement a guiding principle in teacher preparation.
- Create a database of resources for educators.
- Ensure that training components include K-8 educators.
- Provide content in multiple modes to improve teacher access.
- Evaluate what teaching resources and textbooks need to be retired.

General Recommendations

- Partner with historical and cultural organizations versed in culturally-responsive pedagogy and African American history.
- Develop a model anti-racism educator policy approved by the Virginia Board of Education.
- School Divisions review inclusion of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Culturally Responsive Practices as part of division strategic plans.

General Recommendations

- School boards include culturally responsive awareness as part of the school board's professional development and training.
- Develop guidelines for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Culturally Responsive Practice in Virginia. These guidelines should be informed by the profiles developed by the Commission and developed in consultation with a list of experts and researchers recommended by the Subcommittee (Appendix F of report).

General Recommendations

- Establish minimum criteria for state approved professional development in the following areas:
 - **Culturally Relevant Teaching:** Acquisition of curriculum and pedagogical knowledge
 - **Cultural Proficiency:** Mastery of knowledge
 - **Culturally Responsive Teaching:** Application of knowledge
 - **Anti-Racist Education:** Strategies
 - **African American History:** Content and Pedagogy

Culturally Responsive Practice: *Virginia's Expectations*

Establishing expectations for Virginia's educator workforce is critical to supporting the effective delivery of professional development and are framed into four quadrants:

- (1) culturally responsive schools
- (2) culturally responsive leadership
- (3) culturally responsive educators
- (4) culturally responsive pedagogy.

Culturally Responsive Schools:

- Safe, inclusive, and secure environments where all students are affirmed.
- Have established and evolving pathways, access, and support to rigorous college and career preparatory classes for all students.
- Provide universal access to culturally relevant pedagogy that builds positive cultural identities.
- Have an educational environment that is free from implicit and explicit racial/ethnic and gender biases.
- Produce high student achievement rates in state accountability (the most basic outcome).
- Have systems in place to mitigate racial or cultural tensions.
- Have a climate in which all students and staff have a sense of membership and belonging and provide forums both inside and outside of the classroom where everyone can learn about each other's diverse backgrounds.

Culturally Responsive Leadership:

- Deploy resources and professional learning opportunities to advance cultural proficiency.
- Evaluate cultural responsive efficacy during teaching observations and evaluations.
- Establish high expectations for all students.
- Mitigate power imbalances based on race, culture, ethnicity, and class.
- Establish policies and procedures to advance anti-racist school culture and climate.
- Ensure recruitment and retention of teachers of color and demonstrable cultural responsiveness competencies.
- Establish mentoring practices for new teachers and staff in culturally responsive pedagogy and practice.
- Accept cultural responsiveness as endemic to effectiveness in all areas of learning for students from all ethnic groups.
- Create caring learning communities where heritages are valued.

Culturally Responsive Educators:

- Reflect on their own cultural lens.
- Model high expectations for all students.
- Promote respect for student differences.
- Recognize and redress bias in the system.
- Challenge stereotypes, prejudices, racism, and other forms of intolerance, and oppression.
- Are change agents for social justice and academic equity.
- Cultivate relationships beyond the classroom anchored in affirmation, mutual respect and validation.
- Engage in reflection of their beliefs, behaviors and practices.
- Communicate in linguistically and culturally responsive ways.

Culturally Responsive Teaching/Pedagogy:

Establishes a 3-pronged approach: institutional, personal, and instructional:

- **Institutional:** recognizes a need for reform of school policies and procedures based on cultural factors.
- **Personal:** requires teachers to become culturally responsive.
- **Instructional:** provides educational materials that are culturally affirming and aid in delivering culturally responsive instruction.

Culturally Responsive Teaching/Pedagogy:

- Is student-centered.
- Identifies and nurtures students' cultural strengths to promote student achievement.
- Affirms cultural and individual identity.
- Uses cultural differences as assets necessary to inform the development of instructional resources.
- Mediates power imbalances based on race, culture, ethnicity, and class.
- Utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning.
- Establishes high expectations for all students and provides support to ensure success.
- Diverse groups from all rings of culture are represented, validated, and affirmed.

*If you can **show me how I can cling to that which is real to me**, while teaching me a way into the larger society, then and only then will I drop my defenses and hostility, and I will sing your praises and help you to make the desert bear fruit.*

- Ralph Ellison